

Traffic trouble spots

HUDSON RIVER CROSSINGS

George Washington Bridge: The entire eastbound lower level will be closed until 5 p.m. today, and from 11:59 p.m. tonight until 8 a.m. tomorrow. Two of three lanes of the eastbound roadway leading to the Cross Bronx Expressway from the upper level and one lane of the eastbound upper level will be closed from 11:59 p.m. Saturday until 8 a.m. Sunday. Two of three westbound lanes of the roadway leading to the upper level from the Cross Bronx Expressway and two of four westbound lanes of the upper level will be closed from 11:59 p.m. tonight until 8 a.m. Saturday. The westbound, lower-level Fletcher Avenue exit in Fort Lee will be closed from 6 a.m. until 9 a.m. Sunday.

Lincoln Tunnel: The eastbound helix closed from 11:59 tonight to 7:30 a.m. tomorrow, and 11:59 tomorrow night until 8 a.m. Sunday. One lane of the eastbound helix from Pleasant Avenue to the toll plaza closed Monday through Friday, from noon to 6:30 p.m. Two lanes of the westbound helix closed tomorrow and Sunday, from 1 a.m. to 2:30 a.m. The entire westbound helix closed tomorrow from 2:30 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. on Saturday and until 7 a.m. on Sunday. Due to construction on the New York entrance roadway of the North Tube, beginning at 12:01 a.m. Saturday and ending at midnight Sunday, motorists are advised to expect delays.

Holland Tunnel: One lane of the roadway between Henderson Street and the eastbound tunnel entrance will be closed Monday through Thursday, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 a.m., and Saturday from 12:01 a.m. until 8 a.m. One eastbound lane of the tunnel closed Sunday and Monday, from 11:59 p.m. to 5:45 a.m. the following morning and Monday through Thursday from 11 p.m. to 5:45 a.m. the following morning. Westbound, one lane closed Sunday through Thursday from 11 p.m. to 5:45 a.m. each morning.

Bayonne Bridge: Until further notice, one lane closed in the bridge plaza area from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

GARDEN STATE PARKWAY

Hillsdale: From milepost 166 to 172, one northbound lane closed Monday and Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Paramus: From milepost 166 to 163, one southbound lane closed Monday and Tuesday from 7 a.m. to 6 a.m.

East Orange: From milepost 150 to 148, one southbound lane closed Monday and Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Sayreville: From milepost 128 to 126, two southbound lanes closed Monday and Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Holmdel: From milepost 118 to 116, one southbound lane closed Monday from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tinton Falls: From milepost 107 to 109, one northbound lane closed Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. From milepost 107 to 106, one southbound lane closed Monday, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. From milepost 104 to 106, one northbound lane closed Tuesday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Brick Twp: From milepost 93 to 97, two northbound lanes closed Monday and Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Somers Point: From milepost 30 to 31, one northbound lane closed Monday and Tuesday from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Upper Twp: From milepost 26 to 25, one southbound lane closed Monday and Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE

Cherry Hill Twp.: Right lane closed southbound between interchanges 4 and 3 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday.

South and East Brunswick: Various lanes between interchanges 8A and 9 closed in both directions. On Monday and Tuesday, northbound closures from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and southbound, from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Bordentown Twp.: The left lane southbound between interchanges 7A and 7 closed Monday and Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Jersey City: Left lane closed westbound east of interchange 14C from 5 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Monday.

Runnemede Borough: The right lane southbound between interchanges 3 and 2 closed from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Monday.

Woolwich Township: Left lane closed northbound between interchanges 1 and 2 continuously from 6 a.m. on Monday to 5 p.m. on Tuesday.

East Greenwich Twp.: The left lane closed northbound between interchanges 2 and 3 from 7 a.m. on Monday to 4 p.m. on Tuesday.

HIGHWAYS

Route 7: Jersey City/Kearny, one lane of the Wittgen Bridge over the Hackensack River will be closed in both directions weekdays, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. until July 1990. North Arlington/Kearny/Belleview, lane closings on the bridge over the Passaic River for rehabilitation 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday until Dec. 29.

Route 17: Northbound and southbound from Franklin Turnpike in Ramsey to Allendale Avenue in Allendale and Saddle River, lane closings 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays for two years.

Route 208: Oakland, from Colonial Road to Route 202, down to one lane eastbound until March, as part of Route I-287 project.

Route 23: West Milford, sporadic lane closings over the Macopin River weekdays from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. until September 1990.

Route I-80: Wharton/Rockaway/Denville, lane closings from Route 15 to Beaver Brook during nonrush hours until early 1992. The left lane of the roadway westbound will be closed until late November. Byram Township/Knowlton Township, lane closings between the Musconetcong River to Stony Brook through January of 1990.

Routes 1&9: Newark/Kearny, local lane closings of the deck over the Waverly Yards through Dec. 31. From North Avenue in Elizabeth to Milton Street in Rahway, intermittent lane closings weekdays from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for bridge demolition until the end of the year.

Route 280: Newark, weekday lane closings on the Stickie Bridge over the Passaic River, east and westbound between 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and 15 minute lane closures on weekends between 9 p.m. and 4 a.m. until Feb. 16.

Route I-78: Three lanes westbound and two lanes eastbound open on the Frelinghuysen Avenue bridge in Newark.

Route 278: Linden, lane closings on the bridge over Park Avenue and westbound ramp B over relocated Routes 1&9 until mid-December for deck repairs.

Route 1: Plainsboro, the east and westbound exit ramp to College Road closed until further notice.

Route 35: Aberdeen/Keyport, one lane in both directions from Amboy Avenue to the Broadway overpass through the fall. In Sayreville, lane closings on the Cheesapeake Creek Bridge weekdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. through April. Also, on the Shark River Bridge between Belmar and Neptune, one lane closed in both directions from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays until Jan. 1.

Route 46: East and West in Montville and Fairfield, lane closures weekdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. until Friday. Route 46 and Route 3 interchange in the vicinity of Valley Road in Clifton has lane restrictions from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays until Wednesday. Route 46 westbound from the vicinity of Lower Notch Road to Notch Road in West Paterson has lane closings from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays until Wednesday.

Rt. 31 upgrade on line

By JEAN BRANDES

The new dualized section of Route 31 in Clinton Township opened yesterday to four lanes of traffic, and two new traffic lights began full operation.

The traffic lights at Payne Road and Molasses Hill Road had been blinking for a couple of days to get drivers accustomed to the new traffic patterns, according to state Department of Transportation spokesman Randy Linthorst.

Police reported few problems except a tie-up for a time at Payne Road because drivers were unsure of lane patterns.

The 1.4-mile section from Ailerton to Payne road was widened from two

to four lanes during the \$6.7 million project. In addition, a median barrier was installed and jughandle turns with signals were constructed. The remaining site work is expected to be completed by Dec. 21, Linthorst said.

The project began in November 1987 when workers started removing trees and brush along the heavily traveled north-south corridor through Hunterdon County. A groundbreaking ceremony to mark the start of construction was held March 11, 1988.

The general contractor for the project is Marsellis-Warner Inc.

The project is funded completely through the state Transportation Trust Fund.

Lunch-time buddies witness the fury of nature

By GUY STERLING

While most midday meals usually last no more than an hour, the lunch break that John Collins and Barry Veith took yesterday will stay with them a lifetime.

"It certainly was exciting, but I wouldn't want to experience anything like that again," said Veith, a 36-year-old resident of Bloomingdale. "It blew my mind."

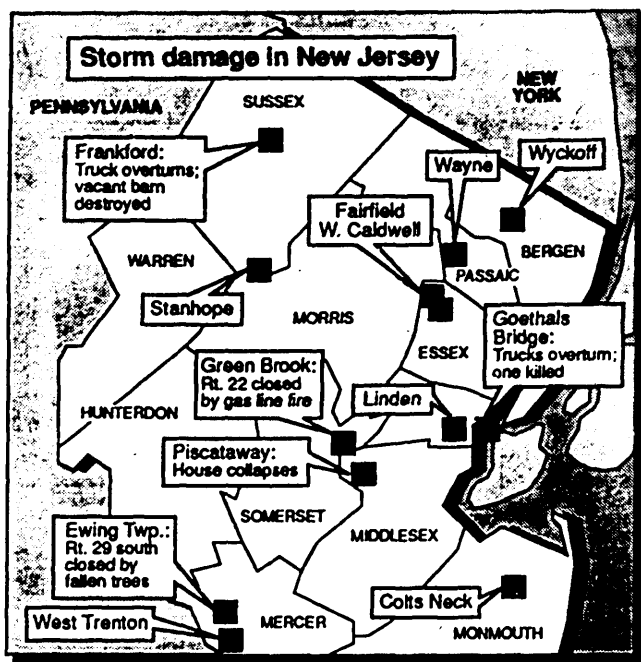
Collins and Veith work at a company in Fairfield that makes coaxial cable for automobiles. Collins as a mechanic and Veith as a warehouse and delivery man. Just before noon yesterday, they decided to jump in Veith's car and drive to a lunch wagon they sometimes frequent on Spielman Road in an industrial park off Route 46 where they are employed.

As they approached the food truck, Veith said he thought he noticed a strange configuration in the sky and mentioned it to Collins, his passenger.

"He told me there was a funnel heading toward us, but I didn't believe him," recalled Collins. "I do now."

Veith had just finished ordering two bagels with cream cheese when one of a series of twisters that struck North Jersey yesterday touched down on top of the Baxter Rubber building directly across the street from the vendor's vehicle.

"The roof exploded, sending roofing material, tar and metal flying everywhere," said Collins, who watched the destruction from inside the car. "An exhaust fan that must have been 3 1/2 feet high and 2 1/2 feet wide landed no more than five feet from where we were parked. The force of the wind was



Star-Ledger Graphic

so strong it made the car bounce."

At least one nearby power line was torn down in the turmoil and the collapsing roof "completely buried one car in the Baxter Rubber parking lot," he added.

Veith said he and four or five individuals from inside the truck wasted no time fleeing for safety when the tornado hit. They headed for the nearest

structure, a business that converts vans for use by handicapped drivers.

Their first concern was to make certain one of the firm's wheelchair-bound workers who had been in line at the lunch truck also escaped danger, Veith added.

When the commotion in the immediate area seemed to subside, Veith said he ventured outside to check on

Collins. But objects continued shooting through the air.

"I was dodging roofing items and pieces of metal," he said. "I could even feel nails whizzing by my ear."

Down the road, several other twisters were snatching the roofs off different buildings, Veith reported.

After he determined that Collins had survived the calamity without physical harm, Veith said the pair returned to their own place of employment but later came back to the Baxter Rubber area.

"The corner of our building had been lifted up but the damage was minor compared to what we had seen," said Collins, 27, who lives in Haledon.

At Baxter Rubber a second time, the pair said they saw between eight and 10 workers standing outside the plant.

By midafternoon, Collins and Veith were sent home from work for the day, their own plant having lost its power from the storm.

Veith said he survived the experience with vivid memories of a change in weather when the twisters swept through the park.

"As the funnel was coming, rain began falling in sheets so heavy that they were cutting across each other and some hailstones were mixed in with them," he said. "The sky was a deep grey, but there was no thunder and lightning. There also must have been a change in pressure because I recall that my ears popped."

"Once it was over, everything got cold. The temperature must have dropped 15 degrees, maybe more."

Collins said he felt lucky to be alive.

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